

Speaker: Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin

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Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin: Good evening everyone. Let us continue on our journey together. As you recall, yesterday we spoke of our motive for being here and the motive for our study as the experience of emptiness. The experience of not knowing, from the point of view of the ego or self [inaudible gap] know that last night that that experience gives birth to, is the origin of both confusion and enlightenment, confused mind or awake mind. And we talked about enlightened mind, or awake mind, as the absence of two things, bewilderment, or panic, and the absence of its result, which is pain, confusion, misery, whatever you would like to call it.

So, in terms of our study, the description of enlightened mind would not seem to be helpful at this point, because when we talk about absence of something, there's not very much to say. But let us say, at this point, that we could describe enlightened mind as self-luminous, light unto itself, and its operational mode as being two things: discriminating awareness and delight. We could say that's how enlightened mind works. But, if we try to dwell on that description, I don't think anything is going to happen particularly in our journey. In other words, if we try to concentrate on self-luminous, discriminating awareness, and delight, I'm afraid we'll be at a loss to come back to absence again and experience of sunyata. So, the path, as it has been taught since the time of the Buddha, is first to describe, study, confused mind. By doing so, the absence of confused mind should be obvious.

But, we should again emphasize that, as we talked about last night, study, what we mean by study is both intellect and intuition combined. So, simply to hear about the description and the categories of confused mind does not necessarily mean that enlightened mind will be obvious. In this case, what we are saying is that first it is necessary to hear, then second to contemplate or think about what we have heard, and third to practice. And the practice, in this case, as it has been taught, is the practice of meditation. So, in order for enlightened mind to become obvious, that is to say, enlightened mind is not produced by any action on our part, it simply becomes obvious, we have to first look at what we call confused mind.

Now, as we talked about last night, the experience of sunyata, or emptiness, gives rise to a sense of panic or bewilderment, and that bewilderment is the beginning of what's called consciousness, or the form or shape of confused mind. Consciousness is the development of what is called ego, the assumption of a separate self, an I, different, separate, from all that is, or in this case, separate

from that experience of emptiness. When we talk about emptiness, or sunyata, we're talking about that real feeling, real experience, where there is no pre-conception and no personal involvement at all, in terms of I, name and form and history and memory, which happens to everyone of us all the time. So, it is not simply that panic or bewilderment is a matter of record. Somebody said that the next thing that happens is panic after sunyata experience and it goes down the line. We should look at it more closely, because it happens experientially to all of us all the time, and that happening is a development of what we call consciousness, or mind, at least basic mind, what we call mind.

What we call mind is consciousness, is conscious. It has a form. So, let's look at that development of separateness from experience of no ground, what we call no ground, not knowing, egolessness. It's all the same thing. Everybody understands, in one way or another, what we're talking about: how that development occurs. And it is necessary to study that development in order to apply the practice of meditation. The first sense of panic is what's called experience. Sunyata, sunya, I should say by itself, is non-experience, empty by itself is not experience. To have experience, you must have someone to experience. So, in a very fundamental sense, the first someone that evolves, in terms of what we call ourselves finally at the end, is separation from that emptiness, no thing. That is so sudden that it produces what we call ignorance, basic ignoring of our fundamental nature, who we are, what we are. So, the first development of consciousness is ignoring the basic nature of reality. And, experientially, it's a sense of panic or freezing, beginning to solidify emptiness, no thing into some thing, and that first tone of some thing, that first beginning of consciousness, is like a bank, a reservoir, of ignorance, turning away from our basic experience, who we are, what we are. And that turning away from creates its own momentum. As soon as we begin to turn away from our basic being, sense of being, we have a being with consciousness and that fundamental ignorance serves as a continual reference point for our life, as we develop, as we go along. Whenever that experience of emptiness occurs, we immediately refer to that sense of ignorance so as not to feel panic. So, basically what we do is a dull everything out immediately, freeze it like ice.

That basic iceberg, fundamental ignorance, gives rise to the potential of going further away from the experience of mind as it is, because we have only two ways to go: either experience that or create something, which is further away from our fundamental panic, which gives rise to the next aspect of consciousness, which is kind of the beginning of movement, the beginning, the formation of embryonic thought pattern, in terms of emotion, sensation, memory, dream, all the rest of it. The second aspect of consciousness is like cloudy mind. It's called a cloud-like, a cloudy mind, because there are swirls and things are beginning to form.

From that potential, from that movement, we develop further what's called the Six Sense Consciousnesses. And next comes what's called cognitive mind, which is considered a sense consciousness at this point. The mind which regulates the five senses, so that we taste, touch, smell, hear, and see, all at once. Five sense consciousnesses along with mind, cognitive mind, makes six sense consciousnesses, organizer of the other five. So, we have eight altogether. Eight states of consciousness, which is the basic mind of all beings, human beings. That is the portrait of confused mind and it is an evolution or momentum away from the experience of reality as not having any basis, any ground.

So, you have the first sense of being apart or separate as ignorance and, from that, you have movement in terms of potential, generating the thought pattern and emotions and sensations, which become the five/six sense organs, which complete what's called perception of myself and other,

separation to duality. This is how mind works, according to the Buddhist teachings, basic mind, what everybody has, what everybody experiences.

Now, as we said earlier, confused mind brings about suffering or pain or misery. So, we should again recognize why we are studying this subject at all.

The development of consciousness has two aspects: one is ignorance, the other is speed or momentum, movement. Confusion, as a whole, or pain and misery, are involved with those two aspects of mind: ignorance and movement, or speed. So, what we call consciousness develops in a fraction of a second and, because of that movement away from basic being as such, we double our confusion and triple our confusion and continue in that way. In other words, we build a reference point continually so as to avoid any sense of actually being here, nakedly, and the truth.

But, as we talked about earlier, if we're going to study and meditate and approach this subject, it is necessary for us to follow the steps of how that perception of being frightened takes place. We all think very glibly that we know what is being talked about when we say panic and bewilderment. But, let us say that this is not exactly so. We know it from the point of view of fully developed consciousness. These eight states of consciousness we are talking about are simply embryonic mind. Before we even approach feeling, perception, concept, and consciousness in its fullest sense, we're talking about embryonic consciousness. How we all begin to have some sense of being separate.

Well, what is the point of studying all this, talking about this? We're talking about mind and meditation. From the Buddhist point of view, it's very dry, not very romantic, in fact very simple. First of all, let us see what mind is. And how to do that is to practice the technique of meditation as it has been taught. Why so? What is it that sees this eight states of consciousness? Well, obviously it's some sense of awakened mind that sees confused mind. But how to do it is very simple. We are not talking about changing or disrupting that momentum or development of confused mind in the least; not even one iota, not changing anything at all. Those eight states of consciousness, if allowed to develop uninterruptedly, gives birth to the sense of obvious enlightened mind on a very basic level. So, we're not talking about heightened consciousness, we're not talking about dulling consciousness, we're not talking about revving up anything at all, we're talking about meditation practice is the opportunity to allow that sense of development of ego to occur in the full light of awareness, full light of mindfulness, what we call the self-luminous mind, in the beginning. You see, as we said, we are all looking for something. We are all looking for some kind of pleasure. And that pleasure, as we said yesterday, from the point of view of awakened mind, is called buddha nature; from the point of view of confused mind, is called the continuation of suffering.

So, we have to use what's there, the material we have, which is consciousness pure and simple. And mind which sees that development pure and simple. No alteration. Just as it is. So, we apply meditation technique to the eight types of consciousness. And that's what we do, straight off, if we want to step on this path. And we don't do anything else.

How to do that? Again, we're not talking about how to dissect, analyze anything at all. When you actually perceive an object, the first thing that happens is non-thought. When you look, just look, there's no you, and there's no object, as such. There's just pure perception which is the experience of shunyata. From that develops a continuation of separateness to the point where we have everything neatly packaged: I am looking at you. And the whole thing develops that way. In

terms of practice of meditation, what we are saying is that this is the nature of confused mind. But, don't be confused about how to practice. Don't be confused in thinking that you must destroy or magnetize or enrich this particular mind or ignore it completely. What we should do, if we are to practice properly, is to let it unfold uninterruptedly during the practice of meditation. Especially, because when we are sitting on a zafu practicing, then the sense of accomplishment, sense of building up more fantasy, is very much minimized up until a very point, very single point, and that point is sense of being. Being who? Being me. How does me be here? And then we see by just sitting there and breathing.

That's basically how we begin to practice, what we work on, practice of meditation. If you have any questions, we could have a discussion.

QUESTIONS

Question: Could you clarify a statement that you just made regarding pleasure and why pleasure is suffering when experienced from the unenlightened state?

Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin: Well, pleasure from the point of view of confused mind is continuing to embellish a sense of ignorance. In other words, whenever we feel pleasure fading, we speed up and try to recreate it again. So, in that case, pleasure is pain.

Q: Then, how is it from the enlightened perspective?

VR: Absence of that process.

Q: A continual enjoyment? [inaudible]

VR: I beg your pardon?

Q: A continual enjoyment, or a ceasing to grasp for it when you lose it?

VR: Well, in that sense, there's no ceasing, and there's no continuing. But, there's just an enjoyment of your mind as it is. Same thing. But, we have to put it exactly properly so we don't confuse anybody.

Question: Could you say something about the precise cause of the panic. What is threatening or frightening about emptiness?

VR: Because it is self-luminous. It's so much itself that it has no self. No echo.

Q: And it's the selflessness that instills the panic?

VR: That's right. Absence of ego produces ego. So we think.

Q: Does that mean that when you're experiencing shunyata, emptiness, you're not aware of the fact that you are experiencing shunyata?

VR: Sure. Yea. Obviously.

Q: Does that mean yes?

VR: Well, it means obviously.

Q: So, there is no way to know if you are really experiencing shunyata.

VR: Correct. Not from that point of view.

Q: So, you can't go looking for it?

VR: Absolutely not. That's why we talk about looking at confused mind. If we go look for self-luminosity, delight, and discriminating awareness, what we're going to find is shunyata which will propel us back into trying to find something else. You see. Because you say, "What is self-luminosity?" It's mind being as itself. What is that? Self-radiant. Self-luminous. What is this quality? It discriminates automatically this, that, and the other. Doesn't have to ever choose. No choice. What is it's tone or feeling? Delight.

Can't do much with that. So, the point is Buddha was very smart, you see, and very enlightened, you know, completely enlightened. So, he taught: take a look at what's not happening. In other words take a look at confused mind. Take a look at a fantasy. How does it work? How do we conjure up the whole thing. Once you see that clearly, then, the rest is obvious.

Q: Well, what I see is a cycle of just being there and then panicing and jumping away from it until that calms down and then doing the whole thing over and over and over and over again.

VR: Yea. OK. Fine. But, now, you see that over and over and over again part?

Q: Yeah.

VR: We have to break that down. We have to see the whole thing frame by frame. That's a very simplistic way of putting it. It's not exactly that way. But, we should have that intention, motivation. You see because everybody here has said to themselves and to others, each other: I know that I'm doing this again, and again. Do you really know? That's already what is called developed consciousness completely when you say: "I know that I do this all the time." Not quite.

Q: How about feel?

VR: Same thing. That's sort of an earlier version of I know.

Q: Hmm.

VR: Interesting.

Q: I'm confused.

VR: Obviously.

Question: I believe you said that egolessness means no ground. It's been my understanding that practicing is aimed at becoming grounded.

VR: Becoming grounded.

Q: Grounded.

VR: "Coming down to earth," as is said here in Dharmadhatu.

Q: Right

VR: Right. Did anyone say it here in Dharmadhatu? How did you hear that?

Q: I think I read it first.

VR: Aah. Alright. Alright.

Q: I'm trying to relate those two.

VR: Yeah. How does no ground become being grounded?

Q: Is it that we develop a sense of groundedness in order to deal with the reality of no ground?

VR: Well. Any way you slice it, it's going to be a quarter pound of nothing. The point is that these eight states of consciousness that we've been talking about tonight develop by themselves without any ground. So, we should, through the practice of meditation, recognize that development. Simply that. To begin with, our first step is recognizing how we perceive who we are and what other is, how we do that. Questions about whether ground is no ground and all the rest of it is a little bit farfetched if we're going to go on our own little journey together. Do you see what I mean? I mean, from my point of view I like to start from scratch always.

Q: Thank you.

Question: I have two questions. And the first is about pleasure and pain again. And I wonder if pleasure is pain, which I think it is. How did it get to be called pleasure? [laughter]

VR: Then I have one quip for you.

Q: Okay.

VR: How did it get to be called pain?

Q: I think the same way it got to be called pleasure.

VR: How did that happen?

Q: Well, I think it has something to do with the nature of mind.

VR: Hmm. Yeah, that's what we've been saying. Yeah, so, we have a short circuit. What's the second question?

Q: I forgot.

VR: Is that pleasure or pain?

Q: It's really painful.

VR: It could be pleasure, right? Some people say forgot means good. Some say forgotten is bad.

Q: I remembered it.

VR: Okay. What is it? That's good.

Q: It seems like anything, if you're dealing with polarity, any one side of it if you carry it to some kind of extreme becomes the other side. And that has something to do with the nature of mind, too, I think. But, I don't understand exactly.

VR: Well, nature of polarity is having this and that, me and other. That's basic polarity. What we're involved with here in the meditation study, meditation and mind, is how that basic me and other evolved. Not saying that anything is bad or wrong, pleasure and pain are bad or wrong particularly. But, Buddha's teaching is: look at your own mind. How does it develop that we have this perception of myself and other? And that myself and other in less philosophical language infiltrates everything that we call experience. What we experience and what we think we are completely encompass that I and other.

Question: I'd like to try to clarify something. You were talking about the evolution of mind, and you seemed to be saying, if I understood, that there is a "shunya". And, as soon as there is the experience of a "shunya" there is a separateness.

VR: That's right.

Q: And that the experience of separateness necessarily will follow all the other eight parts that you spoke of.

VR: That's correct.

Q: That no matter where or when this develops, it's going to go that way. And therefore, that's all we have to work with ...

VR: That's correct.

Q: ... and that's why we work with confused mind.

VR: That's correct

Q: So, in other words, there is no other chance of doing it. This is the only way it can be done.

VR: That's correct.

Q: So, therefor that's all we have to work with.

VR: That's correct.

Q: So, we can't hope to achieve another state of mind.

VR: That's correct.

Q: OK. Thank you.

VR: On the other hand, I did say that something sees that. We have two things always rubbing together hopefulness and lack of hope. So, from our point of view, this particular lineage, we would say that that which sees that is called the beginning of buddhanature, or awakened mind. But, if we dwell on that then we don't see the other. So, we have to see the confused mind which, realistically speaking, as you say, is all we have to work with. But, it's very juicy, very delightful.

Q: The reason you talk about eight states of consciousness. Is that because ...

VR: Because they all talked about it before me. That's the reason I talk about it.

Q: Well, the reason we talked about it. Is that because that's what always is triggering off the process again and again?

VR: That's how it happens, yeah. That's how perception happens. You see when you look at me, you look at me from a point of view. You are already you looking at me. And everything is set up, right? The shrine is here, the people are here, the mike. The whole thing. It's completely set up.

Here he comes. Alright. We landed. If you do it again tonight, I'm going to be real pissed off.

Question: The last statement you made before the question period dealt with fantasy, the word fantasy. You only used it once tonight. You said sitting on the zafu would minimize fantasy. But, I've found, while I was sitting here, well, I had an awful lot of fantasy. I had three kinds of thoughts: past thoughts of my life.

VR: present and future.

Q: and future. Future is the fantasy, so ...

VR: No, no, no. All three.

Q: Oh. Well, then why did you say it's minimized?

VR: Because it becomes very clear.

Q: Yeah.

VR: So, the clearer it becomes, the more small it becomes. And as you sit your past, present and future becomes very small like an insignificant little dot and you wonder why you're even thinking about it.

Q: Hmm. Thank you.

Question: Would you talk a little bit about the possibility of good fortune or the complete impossibility of good fortune in terms of ...

VR: This is good fortune, being here, hearing dharma.

Q: Yes.

VR: That's what's called good fortune.

Q: Yes.

VR: What we call in buddhist terminology auspicious coincidence. It happens through auspiciousness that we are here together.

Q: I appreciate that. [laughter] The question has some tinge of complaint to it in that, what is the genuineness of good fortune on a material level versus the complete insignificance in material good fortune? The genuineness of good fortune being ...

VR: Good fortune being that it is possible to realize that life is made up of eight states of consciousness. That's extremely good fortune. So, that you don't have to cling to anything material in terms of being good or bad. If you make a hell of a lot of money this year, that's good. If you make less, that's bad. But, all together, if we have dharma, that's good. That's it. Good fortune is being able to share some non-aggressive space completely. That look at our world and our life, here we are sitting here. Just sitting up, all of us. How sweet. How nice. How real. Even if we're trying to churn out the whole thinking process. Still everybody's around us and it's lit up. It's self-luminous. And has a certain wisdom in it.

Q: Thank you.

Question: On my way over here I decided that my motive was, for coming was, to change.

VR: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Yet, you said that there was no real ...

VR: nothing to change.

Q: change, yeah. Could you go over that again?

VR: Yea, exactly. That's an extremely good point. Good for all of us. Good at beginning, middle

and end. Our motive for coming here is to change. That is the result of confused mind. Our motive for coming here is to change confused mind into enlightened mind. That is the result of enlightened mind. So, we have the two together. Your motive to change is both good and bad. Practice is checking out the motive as far as confused state is, and let the rest be obvious. So you don't put down your sense of wanting to change, but you realize very straightforwardly, that wanting to change has in itself some sense of, shall we say, deprivation as well. Deprived and expecting. So, how did that happen? In other words the only way to really do it is to sit and practice. Because when you sit and practice you bring the whole bundle of tricks in front of you.

Q: [inaudible]

VR: These questions are good only in this situation. This is involving intellect with all of us. That's good, fine, should be. But, then when we finish this, our movement of the eight states of consciousness between us, then we sit with it, see what happens.

Is that it? Back, back, gentleman with the glasses.

Question: The beginning point of this cycle that we're talking about the eight types of consciousness and the skandhas.

VR: No skandhas. This is first skandha.

Q: OK. The confusion that we're talking about arises from a beginning point of enlightened mind. In other words ...

VR: That's right.

Q: The question is: What's different the second time around? Why don't we fall back into that panic?

VR: We do.

Q: But, don't you reach a point with enlightened mind where you get out of that cycle?

VR: You never reach a point where you get out of that cycle. That's confused mind talking. Confused mind always would like to reach a point where we get out of that cycle. Enlightened mind doesn't have any allegiance to that, particularly. Enlightened mind doesn't wish to get out. There's nothing to get out of. Confused mind would like to get out of that cycle. Do you see what I mean?

Q: I see what you mean in terms from the perspective of a person trying to achieve that.

VR: That's right.

Q: But, the initial point, well, how we ended up being people striving to get out of it arose from initial enlightened mind.

VR: No. no, no. It didn't. It didn't. You see, look, let's get it straight. We'll go back over it again. It arose from what's called experience of shunyata. I mean experience is shunyata—experience of shunya, empty. From that point two things arose: enlightened mind and a confused mind. Shunya is not enlightened or confused. Just is, period. So, we're trying to find out what's confused by using enlightened mind. Which is a neat trick. So, getting out of the cycle of confused mind is using enlightened mind to get out of it. Which is, from enlightened point of view, not trying to get

out of it. It sounds like double talk. But, that's how to practice. In other words, confused mind and enlightened mind have the same origin. But, we don't realize that. All we realize is the speed of who we are already developed. And trying to find out what's real and what isn't real. So, buddhist teachings are trying to explain how to find that out.

Q: But, why would enlightened mind fall into panic in the first place?

VR: Nobody said it fell into panic.

Q: Or, freeze, whatever.

VR: Enlightened mind and confused mind happen simultaneously. If you have a light there's dark. If you have this there's that. If you have confusion, there must be some absence of confusion. So, enlightened mind didn't fall into confusion. Neither did confusion fall into confusion. It happened that way. Since you don't understand that, and nobody else does, then people have taught us how to understand that, which is called meditation practice. If you understand that, there is nothing else for us to say. We'll just be with each other, very simply. But, we have a question. Okay? How did it happen that we are here? How did it happen that your talking to me and I'm talking to you? We have a question about that. That's what's called study of mind and meditation. That's all we're studying our question and answer period.

Straight up number two.

Question: We keep talking about enlightened mind and confused mind.

VR: I do, don't I.

Q: But, isn't it just one mind?

VR: No.

Q: ... that's going through the whole thing?

VR: No.

Q: We have two minds?

VR: Two. Enlightened and confused.

Q: OK.

VR: Unless you tell me. Is it all one mind?

Q: I think so.

VR: You do? Who thinks that? The enlightened part or the confused part? Or is it the same part?

Q: The confused part thinks that. I think.

VR: You copped out on me at the last minute. That's not true. Is it true? Is that really true?

Q: That the confused part thinks that?

VR: How could the confused part think that?

Q: Well, at this point, at this point I'm thinking that everything I'm thinking is the confused part.

VR: Well, you're absolutely right. Absolutely right.

Q: And the second question that I had is about this whole development of ego.

VR: Hmm.

Q: Maybe it's not a question. Is there a certain age at which this starts?

VR: Yeah.

Q: What age is that?

VR: Now.

Q: Okay.

VR: This is the age.

Q: Thank you.

VR: This is the development of ego, right now.

Question: You spoke about a basic reaction or sense of panic that develops from the experience of emptiness, or nowhere, or shunya. I have been experiencing that sense of anxiety or panic a lot tonight sitting here. How does that relate to the development of ego?

VR: Well, I think you have to sit a lot. Practice meditation. And then write me a letter sometime. Otherwise, all I could say is that it relates exactly as I said. I couldn't say anything different. But, if you'd like to talk about it sometime, that would be good. I'd appreciate that.

Gentleman up front.

Question: If we're trying to set up a situation where experiencing the mind exactly as it is ...

VR: Yeah.

Q: Why do we add the emphasis on the breath?

VR: Well, it's the only thing that doesn't have any thought process involved with it.

Q: Why even bother with it?

VR: You tell me. If you didn't bother with that, you'd bother with a million billion other things. So, that's the whole point you see. Come on let's get it really straight all of us. If you're going to practice meditation, let's get it really straight. Meditation practice is a technique, right? A technique to get all that bothersome quality into one process which has no relevance to anything at all. And that's your breathing process. It only has a relevance to one thing, and that's survival. And we'll talk about that in the next few days.

Q: OK. So what's going on when there's a sense of the breathing process masking the awareness of what's going on?

VR: I beg your pardon? What's going on when the breathing process is masking the sense of awareness of what's going on.

Q: You got it.

VR: What's going on is confusion. There's nothing masking. It's just a proliferating the whole junk that we have all the time. I mean when you breathe who knows about it? God almighty, your friends, or earth, or space, or sky? When you breathe, who knows about it?

Q: (inaudible)

VR: That's it.

Q: Good. Thank you.

VR: You're welcome.

Question: Are all thoughts of confused mind manifestations of confused mind?

VR: Uh-huh.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Every last one of them.

Judith, speak.

Question: Alright.

VR: It's eleven o'clock.

Q: I've been noticing that, it seems for most of what I do, the decisions I make, I make up reasons for them.

VR: You do?

Q: Yeah.

VR: How do you do that?

Q: Well, it seems like there's some sense of uncomfortableness about just wanting to do something, so I make up something and ...

VR: Oh, Judith, you're too smart for me. That's awfully smart. So you do. Yes, so you do. So what?

Q: Well, I'm wondering if that means that really that reasons aren't really necessary. I mean that ...

VR: Are you kidding? Judith. [laughter] Please..(inaudible) the balloon is the moon and all the rest of it. And the words are birds and we are here we are. I can't do better than that. You know better. Figure it out for yourself. She does know better than that.

Gentleman with the feet up.

Question: Been talking about experience of emptiness and also been talking about the experience of things, entities, or fullness.

VR: Well, I didn't say anything about fullness.

Q: Alright.

VR: Entities. Entities.

Q: Alright. Well [inaudible] to emptiness.

VR: Yeah. Entities.

Q: Nothing and something.

VR: Right.

Q: And you used the term discriminating awareness as an aspect of ...

VR: Enlightened mind.

Q: Enlightened mind.

VR: That's right.

Q: And it sounds to me that the emptiness came before the stuff.

VR: Right.

Q: On the basis of priority.

VR: On the basis of experience.

Q: Yes.

VR: Not priority, just experience.

Q: Well, then one question I would have is it: on the basis of, not priority, but ...

VR: Evolution?

Q: Fundamentality?

VR: Evolution?

Q: No. Fundamentality that we have emptiness first?

VR: I would say that fundamentally no.

Q: Really?

VR: Yeah. Fundamentally no. On the basis of experience we have emptiness first. Fundamentally emptiness and form same time. But in the terms of experience which we call consciousness, form comes first. I mean, emptiness comes first. Sorry. Sorry. I was just reverting back to my old self. In any case, the way we experience it is form comes first.

Q: What?

VR: That's the way we experience it.

Q: Form comes first.

VR: Yeah. The way we as individuals experience it, it's form. We experience first projection before we experience ourselves. You know, before you think about you, you think about that.

Q: Before you think about you, you think about ...

VR: You think about what you see.

Q: I don't think so.

VR: You don't think so?

Q: No. I don't think you can think about you until you think about that.

VR: Exactly what I say. You cannot think about you ...

Q: I thought you said it the other way.

VR: No. No. No See the point is, you can't think about you until that actually comes about.

Q: OK.

VR: Yeah. That's why we talk about eight states of consciousness. And the first consciousness already that—well, it's very complicated at this point—that first sense of consciousness is already not you, split. You're already split. And the last thing you think about is who's perceiving this, after the whole perception process is done. You see when you begin meditation practice, it's always involved with the object. That's all we have to work with.

Q: Object as breath?

VR: Yeah. The eight states of consciousness is already object, already separated from basic nature, which is okay. What we're saying is no problem there. That's how we do it. So, nobody get scared. Don't get philosophical about the whole thing. Try to get back to the point where you didn't split. You know. That's not it. Split already, we're split. It's Okay. Work on that first.

Okay. Anybody else? One last good one. Ah. Not. So we experience emptiness, right? One last ... It's already developed, too late. Okay. You got it on the pad? Okay. What is it?

Question: This man next to me asked you a question. He wanted to know if all thoughts were a product of the confused mind and ...

VR: I said yes.

Q: You said yes. OK. Delight is a product of the enlightened mind. It's a feeling though, right?

VR: No. Not as a feeling.

Q: Well, is delight a thought?

VR: No.

Q: It's not a feeling either? Oh. What is it?

VR: I don't know. This.

Q: I think that's a thought though.

VR: So, you do. So you do. That's why we have to work on the eight states of consciousness. That's why we do this. You see. That's great, absolutely great, fantastic. If everybody here could just a click, you know, why we do this. Motive. The whole thing is motive. Because we think that's a thought. That's why we do this. It's very simple. Just ordinary flat. It's so flat that nobody could believe it's that flat. It is so flat.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Peter, you're the end of it all. Now, now, before you say anything, let me say that a microphone is coming your way.

Question: What's flat?

VR: Peter, shoot.

Q: Well, what sparked me right then was the flat. I've heard that before ...

VR: Flat.

Q: ... from ...

VR: Flat.

Q: Black?

VR: Flat.

Q: Flat?

VR: Flat. How did you hear that?

Q: What? How did I hear black?

VR: Flat. Flat. Or how did you hear whatever you heard? How did you hear it? How did you hear it?

Q: [inaudible]

VR: That's what we all say.

Q: That's what we all say?

VR: How did you hear it, Peter. Ears? Brain? How did you hear it? Came in through the ears, went to the brain, came out through the mind? What? How did you hear that? What did you hear, by the way?

Q: Black or flat.

VR: I'll tell you what we heard, you and I, right? Was flat?

Q: Flat. Well, that's what I heard originally.

VR: Flat, flat. It's called flat. It's called F, F as in Frank, L as in long, A as in atrium, and T as in terminal. Flat. How did you hear that, Peter?

Q: Well, ah ...

VR: Ears?

Q: Intuition.

VR: Anyway, what's your question?

Q: Well, the others that I've been toying with is something about I sort of have an impulse to ask if once the evolution is seen and continues to go on ...

VR: Say that again.

Q: But, still seen.

VR: Seeing?

Q: Seen.

VR: Seen? S, C, E, N, E?

Q: S, E, E, N.

VR: I, N, G?

Q: Just seen. Past participle.

VR: S, E, E, N.

Q: Yeah.

VR: Oh, seen.

Q: Once it's seen ...

VR: What happens?

Q: That's the question.

VR: That is the question. Well, once it's seen, it regenerates itself, like an old song. You keep remembering the tune but you don't know why. Like when you sing: (sings) You must remember this, a kiss is ... It goes on somehow, huh?

Q: Somehow, somehow.

VR: Yeah. Because we produce that kind of sense of being stuck with this being. Well, actually not being anymore, just repetition, repetition, repetition. And we can't stand it. We can't stand another moment of it. We can't stand it. We hate it. And we repeat it again and again. That's called evolution of our consciousness. Eight states. Just study that.

Q: And it evolves from unconsciousness is the other thing.

VR: That's right. Unconsciousness is not really un-consciousness in the sort of glib Western psychological sense. Unconsciousness in a buddhist sense is already conscious of entity. But that entity has no name, no form, no feeling ... I'm sorry. Has form. How does it go? No feeling, no concept, no perception, no consciousness. Yet, it has a form already.

Q: No subject and object but still a form.

VR: It has subject and object in embryonic sense. Always. As soon as you have panic, you have subject and object. As soon as that happens, you have two. It's just embryonic. You haven't thought of it yet. And when you have thought of it, then you have you and me and the rest of it. The rest of it comes later but, anyway. What else you got, Peter?

Q: Well, I ah...

VR: We're running out.

Q: The particular use that you're making of conscious and unconscious is, uh ... I don't have anything else. That's about it.

VR: Well, just junk the whole stuff. Western psychology doesn't mean anything.

Q: Well, that's not even exactly academic psychology.

VR: It sure is. It's academic and ego. Unconscious is purely a word, purely a symbol, for your mind to hang on to. As far as we're concerned we have to deal with the panic of being here. And it's yes/no always. I am and I'm not. And you know, what we could say is, fuck them if they can't take a joke.

Q: [laughs] [laughter] Compassionate attitude.

VR: Thank you, Peter. It's wonderful.

Alright ladies and gentlemen. I have one more joke for you. And you know what the rest of the line is. Do you remember? Everybody gets that. It's fuck you if you can't take it. Alright. This is the joke.

You have to sit and practice meditation. We can weave this tapestry together by simply taking little bits and pieces. To weave a tapestry which makes complete totality, a picture of mind as it is, we have to stitch. We have to go along very simply stitch by stitch and weave the whole thing. So that it becomes complete embroidered gold, silver, brilliant, self-luminous.

We have some sort of sitting schedule for everybody here. It's a little bit paltry. We apologize because everybody said it would be good to do this ITS in the city this time because people couldn't come to the country. And I said okay. That's the message that came to me from Boulder, I mean to Boulder. That it would be better if I talked in the city because you work, and you could come here in the evenings.

Let me say this. Unless you sit and practice meditation, you don't understand a thing I am saying. So, we'll do our little bit everyday. Okay? And Saturday we'll have nyinthun the whole day. And even then we won't accomplish anything. But, let's take a little step between us, the two of us, three of us, hundred million of us step together. I'd be interested to see where we are going.

Thank you very much. See you tomorrow.